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DE RUEHAS #1120/01 1711403
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 201403Z JUN 06
FM AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1377
INFO RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 0363
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 0356
RUEHRB/AMEMBASSY RABAT 1344
RUEHTU/AMEMBASSY TUNIS 6192
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 1854
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1302
RUEHMD/AMEMBASSY MADRID 8462
RUEHCL/AMCONSUL CASABLANCA 2695
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE

UNCLAS ALGIERS 001120

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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [PBTS](#) [WI](#) [AG](#) [MO](#)
SUBJECT: ICRC PENDING HUMANITARIAN ISSUES IN THE WESTERN
SAHARA CONFLICT

(SBU) In follow-up to a June 10 meeting with Ambassador, Bernard Pfefferle of the Tunis office of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) provided us June 12 a faxed English-language non-paper on pending humanitarian issues in the Western Sahara conflict. Below is the text of selected portions of the note.

PENDING HUMANITARIAN ISSUES

From the outset of the conflict, and even more so since the 1991 cease-fire agreement, the ICRC has been handling requests to trace people who were reported missing during the conflict, whether they went missing in action or were allegedly arrested. The ICRC has received a few certificates confirming the death of prisoners during their internment. The parties must keep information on the exact location and marking of graves and make it available when circumstances permit.

LIST RECEIVED FROM THE POLISARIO FRONT IN DECEMBER 2000

In December 2000, the Polisario Front gave the ICRC a list of 179 missing bearers of weapons. The cases were submitted in stages to the Moroccan authorities, whose written replies were passed on to the Polisario Front. Moreover:

-- in November 2001, 22 people on this list were located and met by an ICRC delegate in Laayoune.

-- during the same month, Morocco released a prisoner captured at the start of the conflict whose status was disputed and who had regularly been visited by the ICRC.

-- in September 2002, the Polisario Front closed six other cases.

-- in May 2003, four people on the list received from the Polisario Front were located and met by an ICRC delegate in Laayoune and Dakhla.

-- in January 2004, another person on this list was located and met by an ICRC delegate in Nouadhibou, in Mauritania.

-- in January 2005, the Polisario Front closed another case.

The ICRC is continuing its consultations regarding the cases that have not yet been resolved.

LIST RECEIVED FROM THE MOROCCAN AUTHORITIES IN APRIL 2002

In April 2002, the Moroccan authorities gave the ICRC a list of 253 soldiers and five civilians reported missing during the conflict. These cases were submitted in stages to the Polisario Front. Moreover:

-- in December 2003, 19 cases of missing Moroccans concerning whom the ICRC had obtained information confirming their deaths in action were closed.

-- in February 2005, the Moroccan authorities closed 32 more cases and reopened six others.

-- in July 2005, the Moroccan authorities closed another case.

The ICRC is continuing its consultations regarding the cases that have not yet been resolved.

LIST RECEIVED FROM THE POLISARIO FRONT IN NOVEMBER 2004

In November 2004, the Polisario Front gave the ICRC a provisional list of 249 missing civilians and 13 missing bearers of weapons. In April 2005, the ICRC talked with families of missing civilians in order to complete its files.

The following month, seven cases were submitted to the Moroccan authorities, who replied to the ICRC in late October. In November, the ICRC passed on these replies to the Polisario Front and submitted a further 230 cases to the Moroccan authorities, including those of 226 civilians and four bearers of weapons.

OTHER MISSING PERSONS

The ICRC is also pursuing its efforts to resolve all documented cases of people who have been reported missing by their relatives or anyone else and whose names do not appear on the above-mentioned lists.

ERDMAN